

(12) UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 419 919 (13) A

(43) Date of A Publication 10.05.2006

(21) Application No: 0521228.7

(22) Date of Filing: 19.10.2005

(30) Priority Data:
(31) 10946712 (32) 22.09.2004 (33) US

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(51) INT CL:
B60R 7/04 (2006.01) B60R 11/00 (2006.01)
B60R 11/02 (2006.01)

(52) UK CL (Edition X):
E2A AARX A101 A118 A120 A162 A163 A190 A403
A507

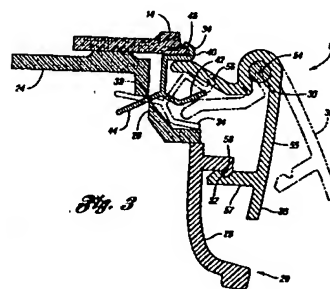
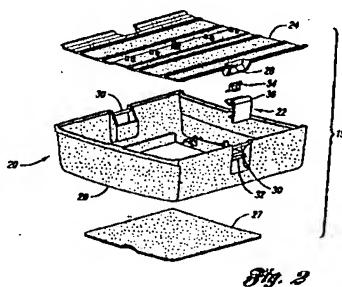
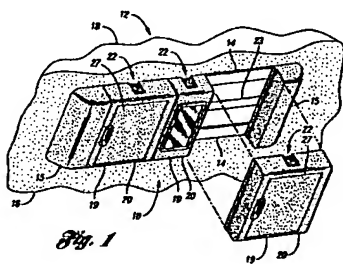
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(58) Field of Search:
UK CL (Edition X) E2A
INT CL B60R, E05C
Other: WPI, EPODOC

(54) Abstract Title: An article holding assembly with lockable operating handle

(57) An article holding assembly (10) that is attachable to a mounting member (14) includes a housing (20) and a latch (34) that is moveable with respect to the housing (20) between first and second latch positions. The latch (34) is engageable with the mounting member (14) when the latch (34) is in the first latch position (fig. 3) to thereby attach the housing (20) to the mounting member (14). Furthermore, the latch (34) is disengageable from the mounting member (14) when the latch (34) is moved toward the second latch position. The assembly (10) also includes a handle (36) pivotally attached to the housing (20) and selectively engageable with the latch (34) for moving the latch (34) between the first and second latch positions.

Formations (32, 58) interengage to lock the handle (36) in the first latch position.



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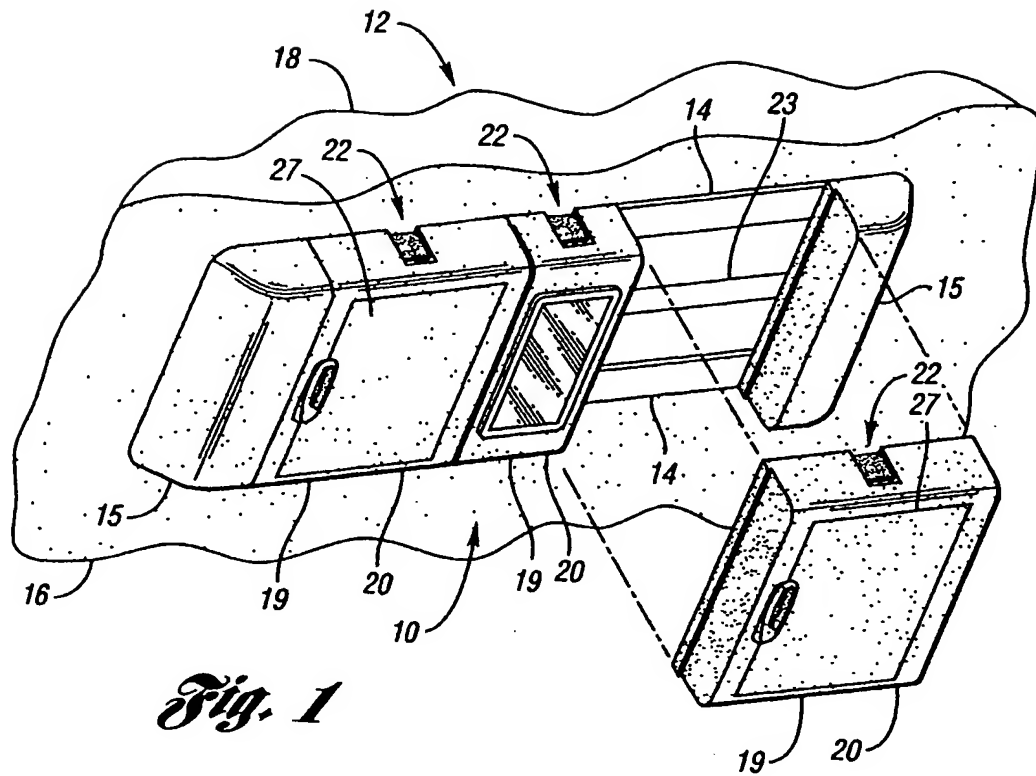


Fig. 1

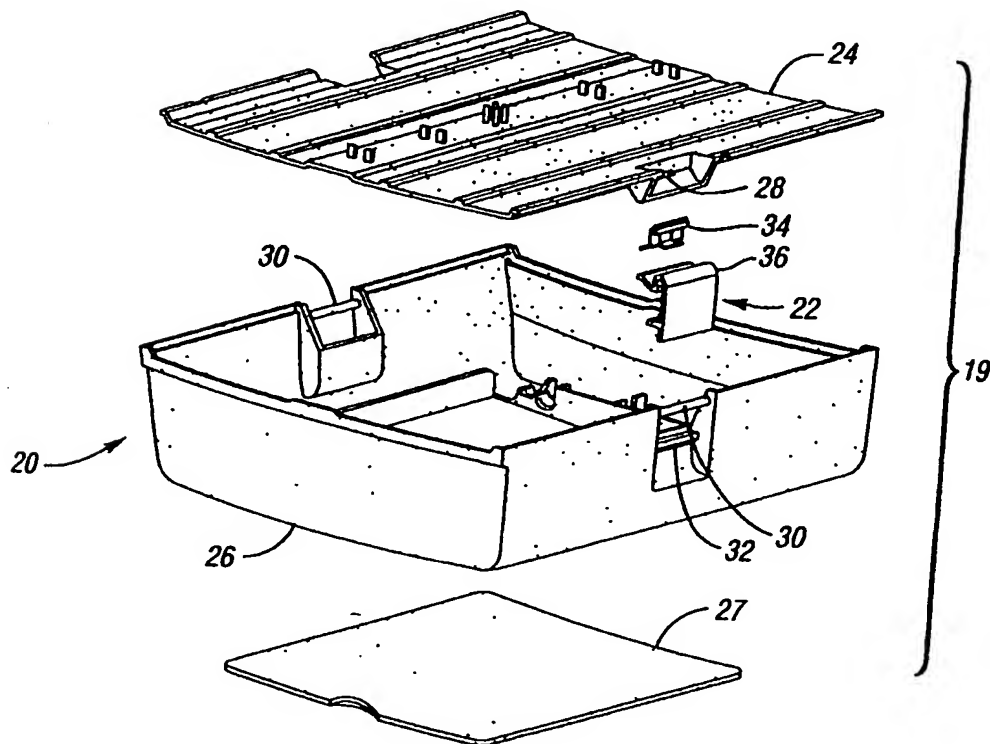
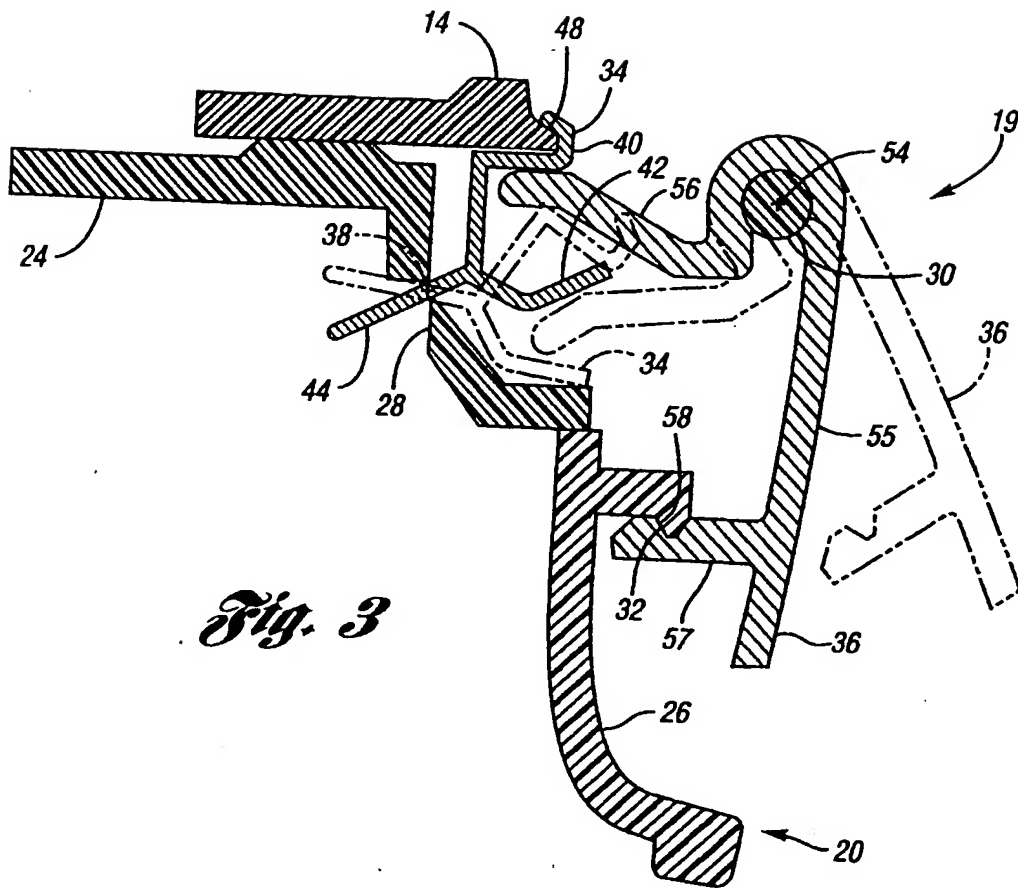
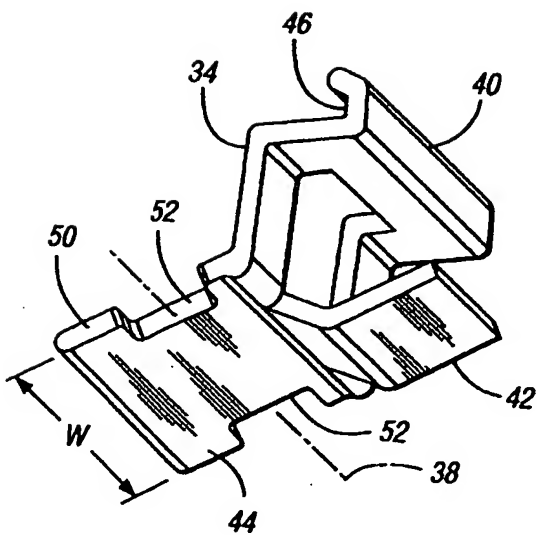
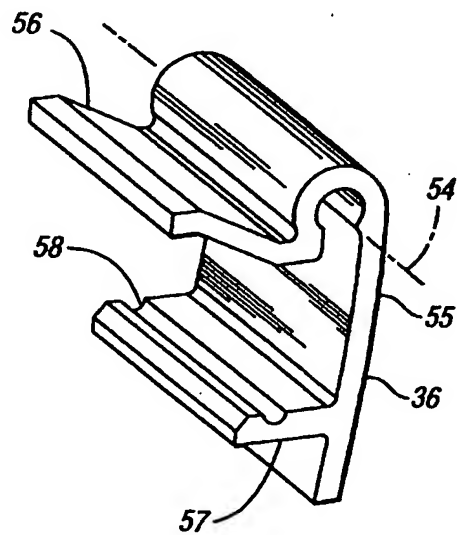


Fig. 2

*Fig. 3**Fig. 4**Fig. 5*

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CONSOLE LATCH ASSEMBLY

The invention relates to an article holding assembly having a latch subassembly.

Article holding assemblies, such as console assemblies, may include
5 fastening mechanisms that are configured for attachment to one or more mounting members. U.S. Patent No. 6,669,260, for example, discloses holders for attaching a console module to a pair of rails.

According to the present invention there is provided an article holding assembly as described in the accompanying claims. There is also provided a console
10 assembly as further described in the accompanying claims.

In an embodiment of the invention there is provided an article holding assembly that is attachable to a mounting member includes a housing having a locking member. The assembly further includes a latch that is moveable with respect to the housing between first and second positions. The latch is engageable with the
15 mounting member when the latch is in the first position to thereby attach the housing to the mounting member, and the latch is disengageable from the mounting member when the latch is moved toward the second position. The assembly also includes a handle pivotably attached to the housing and being engageable with the latch for moving the latch between the first and second positions. The handle is moveable
20 between a locked position, in which the handle is engaged with the locking member, and an unlocked position, in which the handle is disengaged from the locking member. Furthermore, the handle is configured to retain the latch in the first position when the handle is in the locked position.

In a further embodiment of the invention, a console assembly that is
25 attachable to a mounting member in a vehicle is provided. The assembly includes a console body having a slot, a pivot member, and a locking member. The assembly further includes a latch that extends into the slot, and the latch is moveable with respect to the console body between first and second positions. When the latch is in the first position, the latch is engageable with the mounting member. The assembly

also includes a handle pivotably attached to the pivot member and engageable with the latch for moving the latch between the first and second positions. The handle is moveable between a locked position, in which the handle is engaged with the locking member, and an unlocked position, in which the handle is disengaged from the locking member. Furthermore, the handle is configured to retain the latch in the first position when the handle is in the locked position.

In a still further embodiment of the invention, an article holding assembly that is attachable to a mounting member includes a housing and a latch that is moveable with respect to the housing between first and second latch positions. The latch is engageable with the mounting member when the latch is in the first latch position to thereby attach the housing to the mounting member. Furthermore, the latch is disengageable from the mounting member when the latch is moved toward the second latch position. The assembly also includes a handle pivotably attached to the housing and selectively engageable with the latch for moving the latch between the first and second latch positions.

The present invention will now be described by way of example only with reference to the following figures in which:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a console assembly according to the invention including multiple modules that are attachable to a pair of tracks;

FIGURE 2 is an exploded view of one module showing a latch subassembly that includes a latch and a handle for moving the latch;

FIGURE 3 is a schematic cross-sectional view of the one module showing the latch subassembly in a latched position in solid lines and a unlatched position in phantom lines;

FIGURE 4 is a perspective view of the latch of the latch subassembly;

and

FIGURE 5 is a perspective view of the handle of the latch subassembly.

Figure 1 shows an article holding assembly, such as a console assembly 10, mounted in a vehicle 12. The console assembly 10 is removably attached to one or more mounting members, such as rails or tracks 14. In the embodiment shown in

Figure 1, the tracks 14 are attached to and extend between end caps 15, which are mounted to a headliner 16 and/or roof 18 of the vehicle 12. Alternatively, the tracks 14 may be mounted directly to the headliner 16 and/or roof 18.

5 The console assembly 10 includes one or more modules 19 removably attached to the tracks 14. Each module 19 includes a housing, such as a module body or console body 20, and one or more latch subassemblies 22 that are configured to removably attach the console body 20 to the tracks 14. Although only one latch subassembly 22 is visible on each console body 20 in Figure 1, an additional latch subassembly 22 is disposed on an opposite side of each console body 20.

10 Each console body 20 may be configured to support and/or receive one or more articles. For example, each console body 20 may be a storage receptacle that is configured to store sunglasses, maps, garage door openers, or other articles. As another example, each console body 20 may be configured to support or house electronic equipment, such as a light, a digital video disc player, a display monitor or
15 screen, audio equipment, a universal garage door opener, or any other suitable device. In that regard, the console assembly 10 may include one or more electrical contacts (not shown) attached to one or more console bodies 20 for contacting and receiving electrical power from a power source, such as power strip 23.

20 Referring to Figures 2 and 3, a detailed description of one of the console bodies 20 will now be provided. The console body 20 shown in Figures 2 and 3 includes a base portion 24, a main portion such as a bezel 26 attached to the base portion 24, and a cover 27 pivotably attached to the bezel 26. The base portion 24 includes one or more openings, such as slots 28, that are each configured to receive a portion of a respective latch subassembly 22, as explained below in detail. The
25 bezel 26 includes one or more pivot members, such as pivot rods 30, and one or more locking members 32 for inhibiting movement of the latch assemblies 22.

Referring to Figures 2-5, a detailed description of one of the latch subassemblies 22 will now be provided. The latch subassembly 22 includes a latch
30 34 and a handle 36 that are each moveably attached to the console body 20. The latch 34 extends into a respective slot 28 and is configured to pivot, toggle, or otherwise

move between a first latch position, shown in solid lines in Figure 3, and a second latch position, shown in phantom lines in Figure 3. Generally, the latch 34 is moveable in any suitable manner toward and away from the track 14. In the embodiment shown in the Figures, the latch 34 is configured to pivot or toggle
5 generally about a first pivot axis 38. Furthermore, the first pivot axis 38 may be stationary or moveable. For example, the position of the first pivot axis 38 may change as a result of sliding movement of the latch 34 with respect to the slot 28.

In the embodiment shown in the Figures, the latch 34 includes first, second and third legs or tabs 40, 42 and 44, respectively. The first and second tabs 40
10 and 42, respectively, are engageable with the handle 36, as explained below in detail. The first tab 40 also defines a recess or groove 46 that is configured to engage a lip 48 on a respective track 14 to secure the console body 20 to the track 14. The third tab 44 has a flange portion 50 and one or more notches 52 that facilitate insertion of the third tab 44 into the slot 28. With such a configuration, the third tab 44 may be
15 inserted into the slot 28 at an angle, and then rotated to a generally horizontal position such that the notches 52 are disposed in the slot 28. The flange portion 50 has a width *W* that is wider than the width of the slot 28, such that the flange portion 52 retains the third tab 44 in the slot 28 while still allowing movement of the latch 34 with respect to the console body 20.

20 The handle 36 is pivotably attached to the bezel 26 and is moveable about a second pivot axis 54 between a first handle position, shown in solid lines in Figure 3, and a second handle position, shown in phantom lines in Figure 3. For example, the handle 36 may be snapped onto the pivot rod 30.

The handle 36 has a main body 55 and first and second extensions 56
25 and 57, respectively, extending from the main body 55. The first extension 56 is selectively engageable with the first and second tabs 40 and 42, respectively, of the latch 34, such that the handle 36 is operative to move the latch 34 between the first and second latch positions when the handle 36 is moved between the first and second handle positions. The second extension 57 has a locking feature 58 that is engageable
30 with a respective locking member 32 of the console body 20, to thereby lock the

handle 36 in the first handle position. The first and second handle positions may therefore be referred to as locked and unlocked positions, respectively.

5 While the locking member 32 and locking feature 58 may have any suitable configuration for inhibiting movement of the handle 36 upon engagement with each other, in the embodiment shown in the Figures, the locking member 32 is formed as a projection, and the locking feature 58 is formed as a recess that receives the projection. As another example, the locking member 32 may be formed as a recess, and the locking feature 58 may be formed as a projection.

10 Referring to Figure 3, operation of the console assembly 10 will now be described. The handle 36 may be moved manually between the first and second handle positions to thereby move the latch 34 between the first and second latch positions. When the handle 36 is in the first handle position, the first extension 56 is engaged with the first tab 40 of the latch 34, and the locking feature 58 is engaged with the locking member 32 of the console body 20. As a result, the handle 36
15 functions to retain the latch 34 in the first latch position. When the latch 34 is in the first latch position, the first tab 40 engages the track 14 to secure the console body 20 to the track 14.

20 Upon pivoting the handle 36 in a first direction about the pivot rod 30, the handle 36 disengages the locking member 32 and the first tab 40, and engages the second tab 42 to thereby move the latch 34 from the first latch position toward the second latch position. As a result, the latch 34 pivots in a second direction opposite the first direction, and the first tab 40 disengages the track 14.

25 If the particular module 19 includes more than one latch subassembly 22, each latch subassembly 22 may be operated in a similar manner. When all latch subassemblies 22 are disengaged from the tracks 14, the console body 20 may be removed from and/or repositioned along the tracks 14. The handle 36 of each latch subassembly 22 may then be moved to the first handle position to thereby secure the console body 20 in any desired position on the tracks 14.

The latch subassemblies 22 of the invention provide a relatively simple and effective means to attach the modules 19 to the tracks 14 and to inhibit sliding of the modules 19 along the tracks 14. Moreover, each latch 34 and each handle 36 may comprise any suitable materials and may be made in any suitable manner. For
5 example, each latch 34 may be formed of stamped sheet metal, such as zinc plated steel, and each handle 36 may be made of extruded or molded plastic, such as polypropylene.

Furthermore, with the configuration described above, each latch subassembly 22 may be provided without a spring to reduce the number of
10 components involved. Alternatively, each latch subassembly 22 may be provided with a spring for urging the associated latch 34 or handle 36 in a particular direction. For example, each latch assembly 22 may include a torsion spring (not shown) that is engaged with the handle 36 for urging the handle 36 toward the first handle position.

15 While embodiments of the invention have been illustrated and described, it is not intended that these embodiments illustrate and describe all possible forms of the invention. Rather, the words used in the specification are words of description rather than limitation, and it is understood that various changes may be made without departing from the scope of the invention as defined in the
20 accompanying claims.

While exemplary embodiments in accordance with the invention are illustrated and disclosed, such disclosure should not be construed to limit the claims. It is anticipated that various modifications and alternative designs may be made without departing from the scope of the invention.

CLAIMS

1. An article holding assembly that is attachable to a mounting member, the assembly comprising:
 - a housing having a locking member;
 - 5 a latch that is moveable with respect to the housing between first and second positions, wherein the latch is engageable with the mounting member when the latch is in the first position to thereby attach the housing to the mounting member, and the latch is disengageable from the mounting member when the latch is moved toward the second position; and
 - 10 a handle pivotably attached to the housing and being engageable with the latch for moving the latch between the first and second positions, the handle being moveable between a locked position, in which the handle is engaged with the locking member, and an unlocked position, in which the handle is disengaged from the locking member, wherein the handle is configured to retain the latch in the first position when
 - 15 the handle is in the locked position.
2. The assembly of claim 1 wherein the latch is generally pivotable about a first axis, and the handle is generally pivotable about a second axis that is spaced away from the first axis.
- 20 3. The assembly of claim 2 wherein the first and second axes are generally parallel.
4. The assembly of claim 2 or 3 wherein the handle is configured to pivot generally in a first direction to thereby cause the latch to pivot generally in a second direction opposite the first direction.
- 25 5. The assembly of any preceding claim wherein the housing has a pivot member, and the handle is snapped onto the pivot member.
6. The assembly of any preceding claim wherein the housing has an opening, and the latch extends into the opening.

7. The assembly of any preceding claim wherein the latch has first and second tabs, the handle is configured to engage the first tab when the handle is moved toward the locked position, and the handle is configured to engage the second tab when the handle is moved toward the unlocked position.

5

8. The assembly of claim 7 wherein the housing has an opening, and the latch has a third tab that extends into the opening.

9. The assembly of any preceding claim wherein the handle has a recess for receiving the locking member when the handle is in the locked position.

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10. The assembly of any preceding claim wherein the latch is configured to engage a lip of the mounting member.

11. A console assembly that is attachable to a mounting member in a vehicle, the assembly comprising:

15

a console body having a slot, a pivot member, and a locking member;

a latch that extends into the slot, the latch being moveable with respect to the console body between first and second positions, wherein the latch is engageable with the mounting member when the latch is in the first position; and

20

a handle pivotably attached to the pivot member and being engageable with the latch for moving the latch between the first and second positions, the handle being moveable between a locked position, in which the handle is engaged with the locking member, and an unlocked position, in which the handle is disengaged from the locking member, wherein the handle is configured to retain the latch in the first position when the handle is in the locked position.

12. The assembly of claim 11 wherein the latch is generally pivotable about a first axis, and the handle is generally pivotable about a second axis that is spaced away from the first axis.

13. The assembly of claim 12 wherein the first and second axes are generally parallel.

14. The assembly of claim 12 or 13 wherein the handle is configured to pivot generally in a first direction to thereby cause the latch to pivot generally in a second direction opposite the first direction.

5 15. The assembly of any one of claims 11 to 14 wherein the latch has first and second tabs, the handle is configured to engage the first tab when the handle is moved toward the locked position, and the handle is configured to engage the second tab when the handle is moved toward the unlocked position.

16. The assembly of any one of claims 11 to 15 wherein the handle has a recess for receiving the locking member when the handle is in the locked position.

10 17. The assembly of any one of claims 11 to 16 wherein the latch is configured to engage a lip of the mounting member.

18. An article holding assembly that is attachable to a mounting member, the assembly comprising:

a housing;

15 a latch that is moveable with respect to the housing between first and second latch positions, wherein the latch is engageable with the mounting member when the latch is in the first latch position to thereby attach the housing to the mounting member, and the latch is disengageable from the mounting member when the latch is moved toward the second latch position; and

20 a handle pivotably attached to the housing and being selectively engageable with the latch for moving the latch between the first and second latch positions.

25 19. The assembly of claim 18 wherein the latch is generally pivotable about a first axis, and the handle is generally pivotable about a second axis that is spaced away from the first axis.

20. The assembly of claim 18 or 19 wherein the latch has first and second tabs, and the handle is selectively engageable with the tabs to thereby move the latch between the first and second latch positions, and wherein the handle is configured to

engage the first tab when the handle is moved toward a first handle position, and the handle is configured to engage the second tab when the handle is moved toward a second handle position.

21. An assembly substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to,
5 and/or as shown in figures 1 to 5.



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Application No: GB0521228.7

Examiner: Philip Silvie

Claims searched: 1-20

Date of search: 27 February 2006

Patents Act 1977: Search Report under Section 17**Documents considered to be relevant:**

Category	Relevant to claims	Identity of document and passage or figure of particular relevance
X	1-4, 11-14, 18, 19 at least	WO 2001/12925 A (SOUTHCO) see fig. 1
X	1-4, 11-14, 18, 19 at least	WO 2001/79638 A (SOUTHCO) see fig. 6 and page 7, lines 6-11
X	18, 19 at least	EP 1197382 A1 (RENAULT) see fig. 6 and WPI Abstract Accession No. 2002-510602[55]
A	1, 11, 18	US 6669260 A (JOHNSON) see whole document

Categories:

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
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The following online and other databases have been used in the preparation of this search report

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